

Financial jolts signal deeper capitalist crisis

Workers must organize to fight for jobs

By Fred Goldstein

The downgrade of U.S. government credit and the gyrations of the stock market signal greater budget cuts, another downturn in the economy, and more unemployment and suffering unless there is a strong, mass fightback.

Now is the time to fight for jobs, stop layoffs and foreclosures, defend Social Security and other entitlements under attack, and rebuff the bosses' attempts to unload the deepening crisis of the profit system on the backs of the workers.

The downgrading of Treasury bonds by Standard & Poor's credit agency from AAA to AA+ was a message from a section of the bankers and bondholders that they want deep cuts in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

The downgrading had very little to do with the immediate credit worthiness of the U.S. government. It was all about budget cuts. It was a message to the political parties that Wall Street is not satisfied with the debt-ceiling deal that promised only \$2.1 trillion in cuts and was too light on entitlements, in their view. The message was mainly to

Continued on page 6

BRITAIN

Racist killing sparks rebellion

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

In the past year the British government has announced and implemented huge cuts in education and social service programs in the face of growing unemployment and poverty. Now Black and working-class youth are responding with direct action and mass rebellion.

Beginning on Aug. 6 in Tottenham, North London, thousands of youth demonstrated, attacked police cars, buses and businesses in response to the police's unprovoked killing of Mark Duggan, a 29-year-old Black man and father of four. Duggan was travelling in a vehicle on Aug. 4 when he was pulled over by police and shot dead.

Outrage spread throughout the Tottenham com-

Continued on page 11

Verizon workers fight back



PHOTO: CWA

15,000 Verizon workers mass in New York pre-strike rally on July 30. Article, page 7.

'Solidarity with Libya' meetings

LOS ANGELES



ABOVE, LOS ANGELES WW PHOTO: JOHN PARKER

RIGHT, BOSTON WW PHOTO

Cynthia McKinney tour draws crowds coast to coast. See pages 8-9.

BOSTON



McKinney with Boston School Bus Union, Local 8751 delegation.

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Bay Area Indigenous struggle

Ancient shellmound site saved from destruction

By Terri Kay and Stephanie Hedgecoke

Native California Indigenous people have stopped the planned destruction and desecration of an ancient Coastal sacred burial site by the City of Vallejo, Calif. Vallejo agreed to a cultural easement and memorandum of understanding to protect Sagorea Te at Glen Cove.

Ohlone and Miwok shellmound activists set up a 24-hour vigil and encampment on April 14 upon news of imminent plans to destroy the ruins of the Sagorea Te shellmound. Indigenous activists from California Coastal Nations, other Native Nations and the American Indian Movement joined the call to action and faced down the threats of the local government to remove them.

This struggle won support from many: Black and white people in the Bay Area community, Indigenous people and their supporters around the world. A protest outside the Oakland office of Bay Trails resulted in pulling a \$200,000 grant away from Vallejo for the city's project to put bathrooms and a parking lot on the historic site. Recently, the neighboring homeowners' association passed a resolution telling the city they don't want a park on an ancient burial ground.

California shellmound struggle

More than 3,500 years ago, Ohlone, Miwok, Coastal Me-Wuk and Bay Me-Wuk, Wappo, Yokuts, Wintu and Patwin peoples gathered in sacred villages to meet, trade, intermarry, pray and bury their dead in ancient shellmounds.

The shellmounds are historically like the Egyptian pyramids in age, original size and function. Early U.S. Coast Guard maps of the California coast showed their locations — they were so large. Since the California Gold Rush, however, these burial mounds all suffered attacks and outright destruction, to the point where they became almost visibly unnoticeable.

Native activists have fought for 12 years with the Greater Vallejo Recreation District and the City of Vallejo to prevent the destruction and desecration of the Glen Cove Shellmound. Some 13,000 human remains stolen from this and other California shellmounds are now stored in footlockers at the University of California, Berkeley.

As support for the struggle grew through the 104 days of the vigil, Vallejo finally entered negotiations with federally recognized Wintu and Patwin representatives

to discuss a resolution. On July 12, Sagorea Te activists waited for hours to speak before the Vallejo City Council, which had put them last on the agenda. Five had already spoken to a closed session earlier; many more spoke later at the public hearing to support saving Sagorea Te.

Corrina Gould, a Chochenyo/Karkin Ohlone, called on Vallejo to protect the entire 15-acre site and spoke to the history of this struggle. "Over 12 years ago, we became involved in protecting this site that is one of our ancestral burial grounds. ... Before any of the homes were built there, there were actually five shellmounds. Four of them were intact.

"The shellmound at Glen Cove is one of 425 that used to ring the Bay Area. And in the last 100 years, all those shellmounds have been covered over or destroyed."

The struggle to return the remains of the shellmound ancestors continues. Fred Short, American Indian Movement spiritual leader for California, asks supporters to write their senators and President Barack Obama urging him to sign the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights of Indigenous People. Short also requests letters be sent to California Gov. Jerry Brown and the Native American Heritage Commission, 915 Capitol Mall, Room 364, Sacramento, CA 95814, nahc@pacbell.net, to demand that the bodies stored in foot lockers and even worse containers in Berkeley and Sonoma be returned to the Native communities and the shellmounds.

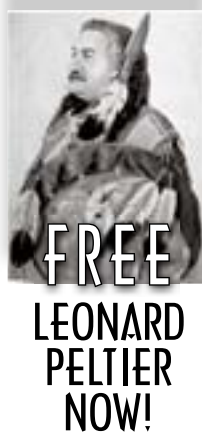
The day-to-day work and building of record solidarity is documented on the website protectglen Cove.org. In a website press release, Protect Glen Cove reports a July 25 visit by representatives of the Native Nations who signed the accord with Vallejo. Yocha Dehe Chairman Marshall McKay sent an open letter thanking Ohlone shellmound activists for their "efforts to protect the sacred sites here at Glen Cove in the City of Vallejo."

According to the July 26 Protect Glen Cove press release, visitors in the last week of the vigil included a contingent from the Oceania Coalition of Northern California, a delegation from "Free Peltier, Free Em All" with Fred Hampton Jr. and a group of Native Hawaiians who stayed late in the evening, sharing songs and stories of Hawaiian struggles. The Vallejo Intertribal Council's annual Pow-Wow was held in downtown Vallejo, where warriors and supporters from Sagorea Te came out in strong numbers to sing the AIM honoring song and Sagorea Te song. □



Native encampment at the Sagorea Te shellmound.

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY



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Durham picket hits austerity budget

By Andy Koch
Durham, N.C.

On the same day that Congress passed the so-called “deficit reduction” austerity bill, North Carolina residents were in the streets calling out the legislation for what it is: an attack on working people.

Members of local trade unions, activist groups and community members picketed outside the Veterans Affairs medical center in downtown Durham. Workers from the medical center also joined in.

“The VA center was chosen since both veterans’ benefits and public medical care in general are going to be cut under the new legislation,” one protester told Workers World. Drawing the attention of motorists and hospital foot traffic, the group chanted slogans such as “Fund people’s needs, not corporate greed” and “Congress, confess: You caused this mess!”

Speaking on behalf of the youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), Eva Panjwani pointed out the injustice of the austerity bill. “They are cutting services that people like us depend on to survive. Why don’t the congresspeople responsible explain to our children why they won’t be getting that birthday present or explain to our elderly loved ones why they will now have to pay out of pocket for medication they need?”



FIST member Eva Panjwani speaks to crowd at VA hospital.

WWW PHOTO: DANTE STROBINO

for medication they need?”

Nearly one trillion dollars in cuts has been established immediately, while deciding on the additional \$1.4 trillion in cuts has been delegated to an unelected committee of 12. Yolanda Carrington of the Bail Out the People Movement addressed the decision to put war spending over people’s

needs. “They are saying there’s no money for health care or veterans’ benefits,” she said, “but we are fighting many wars around the globe, with the newest in Libya starting just a few months ago.”

Members of North Carolina Public Service Workers Union, United Electrical Workers union Local 150 and of American

Federation of Government Employees Local 1738 were part of the demonstration. Essie Hogue, president of the AFGE local, spoke on the duplicity of the elected officials. “They aren’t doing the right thing. Congress is putting all the burden on poor folks and none of the burden on the richest folks.” □

Diverse crowd protests Texas gov’s self-serving ‘Day of Prayer’

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

Immigrants, lots of students and youth, throngs of people from the lesbian, gay, bi, transgender and queer community, church-and-state-separation activists, teachers and parents furious about education cuts, death penalty abolitionists and atheists, as well as religious activists, came out to Reliant Stadium in waves all day long on Aug. 6 to protest Texas Gov. Rick Perry and the religious right.

Presidential hopeful Perry had initiated “The Response: A Call to Prayer for a Nation in Crisis,” a seven-hour program of prayer and fasting funded by the American Family Association. According to the Aug. 7 Houston Chronicle, Reliant Stadium was less than half full. Despite talk of fasting, the lines for drinks, nachos and hot dogs were reportedly filled all day.

Meanwhile, at the Convention Center seven miles away, Texas families struggling through hard economic times stood in lines for hours hoping to get into a citywide back-to-school event. The event closed two hours early as 100,000 people — four times the number expected — picked up free pencils, backpacks, haircut vouchers, immunizations, boxed lunches and bags of free produce.

Back at the stadium Perry, who imposed multi-million-dollar cuts on the Texas education system, was praying for all those “who have lost hope.”

Outside, despite the 100-degree temperatures and unrelenting sun, the sidewalks and grassy areas surrounding the stadium were filled with indignant protesters carrying creative, colorful signs, banners, bullhorns, coffins and rainbow flags from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Texas Death Penalty Abolition

Movement chaired an Open Mike Rally against Hate for several hours. People of all nationalities, genders, religions, sexual identities and immigration statuses lined up to share their outrage and concern.

An African-American transgender woman said, “I need a job. I finished college over 10 years ago and no one will hire me. I want to work! Where are the jobs?”

Victor Ibarra, leader of Alianza Mexicana, agreed. “We are here to work to support our families and demand to be treated with dignity and respect. Gov. Perry has tried to criminalize hard-working people in Texas.” His sign read, “Who would Jesus deport?”

A young African-American lesbian from the University of Houston declared, “Rick Perry doesn’t represent me or my friends.” Silvia Mintz, an immigration lawyer and herself an immigrant, demanded that Perry stop separating families by deportation.

“Jobs, jobs, jobs! That’s what we need!” proclaimed a young gay man.

A number of atheists spoke and many who were religious took the mike to say that Christianity should be inclusive, not divisive and hateful like Perry. “God loves everybody,” said one very well-dressed

woman, “and I do, too.”

Bob Carter, representing Justice for Palestinians, criticized Perry for vacationing in Israel while the Israeli state commits genocide against Palestinians.

Beth Moore from Galveston County was there, as was Annie Laurie Gaylor, president of the Freedom from Religion Foundation, along with the group’s members. The FFRF had filed an unsuccessful lawsuit to stop the event.

Nikki Araguz, a transgender woman who recently lost her spouse while he was fighting a fire at an egg farm outside Houston, spoke of the unbelievable discrimination she has faced over the distribution of his assets since his death.

As the rally closed, the chair told the crowd, “We are abolitionists in a state that has executed almost 500 people since 1982, more than any other state, and Rick Perry has executed 233 people, more than any governor in U.S. history. Perry’s hate for prisoners is the same disregard he has for all working people in this state — teachers, public employees, construction workers, immigrants, LGBTQ people, women and students. But we represent the people of Texas and if we stay united, we can win some important victories from the right wing in this state.” □

PATH riders protest fare hike

Hundreds of PATH train riders, who commute from New Jersey to New York City, joined in protesting a huge fare hike. The protest on Aug. 8 was called quickly by the Jersey City Peace Movement, Action 21 and the Asian Merchants Association of Jersey City. The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey is attempting to ram through an increase that takes the fare from \$1.75 to \$2.75 and raises tolls on the Holland Tunnel to \$15 for those who pay in cash. The Port Authority is really a gigantic bank that pays out billions in interest payments on bonds to banks and hands out sweetheart deals to real estate developers. Public transportation has been given to special “authorities” so they can rob the people with unpopular fare hikes while shielding politicians from blame. But the PATH train system belongs to the people and should be run by them. All the speakers said the combined unemployment, high rents and food prices were totally impoverishing them.

The slogan “End the wars, fund people’s needs” was cheered by the crowd. More actions are planned.

— Gavrielle Gemma

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Attica, Jackson, Pelican Bay

40 years of fighting prison slavery

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

The revolutionary movements abroad for national liberation and the rebellions in major urban cities in this country in the 1960s inspired a revolutionary development within the prisoners' movement that rocked the foundations of the most repressive apparatus of the state. California's Pelican Bay prisoners are continuing that struggle today.

This summer is the 40th anniversary of the 1971 assassination of George Jackson, a revolutionary Black leader of the struggles of California prisoners and also of the Attica Rebellion, a massive protest against the dehumanization and torture of prisoners in a New York state prison. These two events inspired the growth of the prisoners' rights movement.

Prison authorities reacted with the proliferation of security housing units — a 23-hour-a-day lockdown for prisoners who dare to challenge the torture and brutality of the inhumane prison system.

George Jackson & the Soledad Brothers

"I could be killed tomorrow but there ... would be two to three hundred people to take my place," said George Jackson. (Interviews with Karen Wald, May 16 and June 29, 1971)

Jackson was serving a one-year-to-life sentence in the California prisons for stealing \$70 from a gas station in Los Angeles. He spent much of his time inside reading the texts of revolutionary leaders, including Mao Zedong, Kwame Nkrumah, Ho Chi Minh and General Vo Nguyen Giap. He patiently explained his revolutionary thoughts to other prisoners.

On Jan. 13, 1970, prison guards fired into the prison yard at Soledad Prison after a fistfight broke out, killing three Black prisoners. A group of prisoners organized a hunger strike demanding justice. Three days later, the guards were exonerated in court, and within a half-hour of the court ruling, a guard was beaten and thrown from a yard tower to his death.

Jackson and two other prisoners, Fleeta Drumgo and John W. Clutchette, were charged with first-degree murder. The three men became known as the Soledad



Above, Attica prisoners present demands during 1971 prison rebellion. L.D. Barkley second from right.



Left, Black Panther leader George Jackson.



Above, Pelican Bay prison complex.

Left, cages at Pelican Bay.

Hunger strike artwork by Rashid Johnson expresses solidarity.



and National Guard that killed 43 people and wounded more than 150. Frank 'Big Black' Smith, a leader of the rebellion who

lived, called the attack, "cold-blooded premeditated murder."

Pelican Bay hunger strike

This year's heroic hunger strike by prisoners in California's Pelican Bay State Prison Security Housing Unit against the torture of these isolation chambers has also inspired a rebirth of protests by prisoners and their supporters outside.

This three-week strike, which began July 1, took a tremendous toll on the health and welfare of these incredibly courageous prisoners, who were joined in solidarity hunger strikes by thousands of other prisoners, former prisoners and family members throughout California and around the country. The prisoners' demands were simple: stop the torture of the lockdown units, stop indefinite SHU terms, and allow prisoners more visitation, adequate nutrition and access to mail and phone privileges.

The strike ended on July 20 when the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation agreed to "accede to a few small requests immediately ... in support of their assurance that all of our issues will receive real attention," according to a statement issued by Short Corridor Collective, a representative of the Pelican Bay hunger strike leaders.

California SHU prisoners have issued an alert that they may be forced to resume their protest because CDCR is not moving to remedy even the smallest of their grievances. Family members, former prisoner organizers and other supporters are mobilizing to attend a California State Assembly Public Safety Committee hearing about the prisoners' demands on Aug. 23 at the state Capitol.

In 1942, the revered revolutionary leader of the Vietnamese struggle against colonialism, Ho Chi Minh, wrote in his prison diary, "When the prison doors are opened, the real dragon will fly out."

This year we remember the slogans: "Attica is all of us!" "Long live the spirit of George and Jonathan Jackson!" "Stop the torture at Pelican Bay and all lockdown prisons!"

Some information for this article came from the CD "Prisons on Fire: George Jackson, Attica & Black Liberation," produced by Anita Johnson and Claude Marks in 2001 and available from Freedom Archives. □

Wisconsin mobilizes to recall anti-union legislators

With less than 24 hours to go before voting was to begin on Aug. 9 for six recall elections, hundreds of thousands of poor and working people were mobilizing throughout the state of Wisconsin. In what have become the largest recall elections in United States history, the Wisconsin AFL-CIO and other labor, community and student organizations have been spearheading efforts to get their members and others across the state to knock on fellow workers' doors, phone bank, attend protests and fight the right-wing's attempt to disenfranchise voters by encouraging voters to get to the polls.

One recall election already took place in July and two others will happen Aug. 16, for a total of nine this summer. Poor and working people across the state are continuing to mobilize to remove legislators who voted for the anti-union law



PHOTO: WISCONSIN AFL-CIO

Brothers. Their case gave rise to a broad movement of support on behalf of Jackson and the other prisoners.

Six months later, when George Jackson was being brought into the Marin County Courthouse with a group of prisoners, his younger brother, Jonathan Jackson, was killed, along with two prisoners and a judge, after engineering a failed attempt to force the freedom of the Soledad Brothers.

George Jackson was assassinated by prison guards on Aug. 21, 1971, shortly after being brought to San Quentin's Adjustment Center maximum-security unit. Prison officials claimed Jackson had a pistol hidden in his Afro.

that took effect June 29 and the draconian state budget for 2011-2013, which contains the deepest cuts to social programs in state history.

Photo shows Gilbert Johnson, president of AFSCME Local 82, phone banking for the recall elections.

— Bryan G. Pfeifer

People's General Assembly

Protest flails 'dictatorship of bankers'

By Dee Knight
New York

A People's General Assembly near Wall Street on Aug. 2, organized by New Yorkers Against Budget Cuts and others, responded to the debt-ceiling deal signed that day in Washington after a weeks-long game of political "chicken."

"We need to make sure people know that what happened on this infamous day is a threat to everyone who is not a billionaire or millionaire," declared Larry Holmes of Workers World Party at the start of the assembly.

"There's a reason we called it a General Assembly and not merely a rally or protest," Holmes said. "We believe what we're dealing with is a dictatorship of bankers and that democracy is a thin façade — if you blow on it you'll find out it doesn't exist." Holmes recalled that German Nazi leader

Adolf Hitler pushed out what the bankers and German industrialists considered a weak government in 1933, "because it could not wage war on the workers and the poor. They needed their own version of the so-called Tea Party, and so they got behind Hitler," Holmes observed. "This was the beginning of fascism in much of Europe."

Holmes called the "debt ceiling deal" a steamroller that's rolling over education, daycare, health care, Social Security — everything socially useful. He said now we need to "go beyond protest — it's not enough to save this or that. We must say that this government does not represent the people — both parties — we have to consider it illegitimate. There's a provision in the Declaration of Independence that if the government acts tyrannically you have the right to replace it!"

Homeless people were represented by Kendall Jackman of Bronx-based Picture

the Homeless, who highlighted the recent surge in homelessness, which has spiked along with joblessness and home foreclosures. The federal government has failed to do anything to solve these problems, which have reached crisis proportions. PTH recently conducted a citywide "vacant housing inventory," which revealed there is more than enough available housing for all who need it. She called for an expansion of federal and state rent subsidies to make it possible for people to have a home.

Food is a right!

Gwen Debrow of the Food Is a Right Campaign denounced a recent Congressional move to cut \$127 billion from the SNAP food stamp program. This came before the recent debt ceiling deal, and is sure to intensify as the so-called "super-committee" of cutters gets to work, she

said. A conspiracy of silence in the big business media has blocked out public awareness of these cuts, Debrow said. But there's a growing campaign to save the food programs, which help more than 45 million people nationally, and 3 million in New York. These numbers represent just 57 percent of those eligible, she said, since many don't know they can apply. The Food Is a Right Campaign is organizing citywide and nationally, Debrow added.

Larry Hales of the CUNY Mobilization Network and FIST (Fight Imperialism Stand Together) received an ovation when he asked if people were ready to fight these attacks. He urged people to start concretizing plans for struggle in the fall, including the possibility of a people's occupation of Wall Street beginning Sept. 17. A variety of groups have begun to call for such an action, and it was an agenda item at the Aug. 2 assembly. □

Protest speaks for 50 million people

'Don't cut food stamps!'

By Najja Kossally
New York

Dozens of demonstrators gathered in front of the Jacob K. Javits Federal Office Building here on Aug. 5 to protest cuts of \$127 billion to food stamps and the Women, Infants and Children program. Congress mandated the cuts in April, to extend from 2012 to 2021.

This was the first protest of the recently organized Food Is a Right Campaign, which has been in the streets gathering petitions against food stamp cuts for several weeks. Many of the protesters were young. Several organizations were represented at the demonstration, including the CUNY Student Movement, Desis Rising Up & Moving (DRUM), South Bronx Community Supported Agriculture, South Bronx Community Congress and Picture the Homeless.

"We are not represented in Congress," said Gavielle Gemma, an organizer of Food Is a Right, commenting on the disconnect between the legislators and the working class and the need for a grass-roots movement. She called for Food Is A Right committees in every organization and union and on every block to begin exposing the attack on the food stamp program. Gemma pointed out the corporate media's near complete silence on the cuts.

Larry Holmes, of the Bail Out the People Movement, also criticized corporate media's partiality to finance capital, arguing, "We don't need the stock market to drop 500 points to let us know it's a depression." Holmes argued that current levels of high unemployment made cutting food stamps criminal.

Other speakers included Tanaka Nyemba of the CUNY Student Movement. Many city college students, especially women, receive food stamps and are particularly vulnerable to cuts due to recent tuition hikes. Tanaka dismissed the pettiness and venality of Congress and posited access to food as a basic human right, not subject to partisan politics.

Organizer Kendall Jackman, of Picture the Homeless, said about Congress, "They have made it clear they do not care whether we live or die. We have no intention of dying. We are going to fight with everything we have. We will succeed!"

Food stamps needed more than ever

Representative Paul Ryan proposed the \$127 billion cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the new official name for food stamps. Ryan's plan transforms SNAP from an entitlement program into block grants to the states. Formerly, any person eligible for food stamps could receive them. Now, block

grants will allow states to reduce the amount allocated to SNAP recipients due to budgetary constraints.

Block grants will be funded at 80 percent of current SNAP spending. A cap on food stamp spending is particularly egregious now, since the number of people receiving food stamps in this country has been steadily growing for the last 37 months. The Department of Agriculture estimates that 45.8 million people are now receiving food stamps.

The Food Is a Right Campaign is demanding zero cuts to SNAP, with a cost-of-living increase on the allowances currently issued to recipients, no cuts to funding for soup kitchens and food pantries, and food stamps for all, including immigrants.

The food stamp program is one of the most successful entitlement programs to emerge from the New Deal and the Great Society. SNAP recipients redeem their benefits immediately and almost entirely;

the USDA estimates that every \$1 spent on food stamps boosts the economy by \$1.79.

Even Moody's, one of the big-three credit rating agencies which had a hand in causing the current recession and is no friend to the working class, estimates that a dollar spent on food stamps boosts the economy by \$1.72. Food stamps should make sense even to a capitalist.

However, the recent rightward turn of the ruling capitalist class disregards sense in favor of forcing the working class to bear the cost of the recession, even if cutting social programs deepens the crisis.

While Congress hoodwinks the public by alleging there's an immediate need to lower the deficit, the Food Is a Right Campaign speaks a different language than that of Wall Street. For the grass-roots organizers, food stamps do not constitute an entitlement program that is either economically viable or unviable. Rather, access to food is a basic right of every human being. □

Hit by cholera epidemic

Haitians say, 'Withdraw U.N. troops'

Haitians demonstrated in front of the United Nations building in New York on Aug. 5 as the toll from the cholera epidemic in their home country continues to rise. Epidemiologists report that U.N. occupation troops are the probable source of the deadly strain of cholera that is ravaging Haiti. The Citizens Committee for Haitian Protection, which called the protest, demanded the immediate withdrawal of all U.N. occupation troops and reparations for all those affected by the epidemic, which has already killed 5,500 people and sickened almost 400,000. Many of the slogans were directed at Bill Clinton, the overseer of the relief ef-



fort that has collected much money but brought little relief to the victims of the January 2010 earthquake that devastated the country.

— Report and photo by G. Dunkel

9 • 11 • 11 EMERGENCY MOBILIZATION AGAINST RACISM, WAR & ANTI-MUSLIM BIGOTRY
Movilización contra el racismo, la guerra y el prejuicio anti-islámico

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 Broadway y Park Pl.

As UAW negotiations start

GM & Ford earn billions, resist even crumbs for workers

By Martha Grevatt

General Motors announced its second quarter results on Aug. 4. For just the months of April, May and June the company's profits were a whopping \$2.5 billion.

GM made even more in the first quarter — \$3.2 billion after taxes and interest. Not far behind, Ford raked in \$2.4 billion in profits in the second quarter, for a total of \$5 billion in the first half of 2011. Together GM and Ford could net \$20 billion this year.

"We are partners joined at the hip," stated GM CEO Dan Akerson, referring to the company and the hourly workers. "One can't prosper without the other doing well, too."

Akerson's comments came as negotiations between GM and the United Auto Workers formally began. "It is workers whose long-term success depends on the success of the company," echoed UAW President Bob King.

Karl Marx would disagree. "Growth of productive capital and rise of wages, are they really so indissolubly united as the bourgeois economists maintain?" a young Marx asked in 1847. "We must not believe their mere words. We dare not believe them even when they claim that the fatter capital is, the more will its slave be pampered." (Marx, "Wage Labor and Capital")

On the contrary. "If capital grows rapidly, wages may rise, but the profit of capital rises disproportionately faster. The material position of the worker has improved, but at the cost of his social position. The social chasm that separates him from the capitalist has widened."

For example, Marx showed that for a standard 12-hour day back then, a weaver might be paid three English shillings. The factory owner might turn around and sell the worker's product for six shillings, pocketing three shillings as profit. The worker put in six hours for wages and another six producing what Marx called "surplus value," which is what the boss pockets as profit. With a more modern machine the same weaver might make twice as much cloth, which at the same unit price would yield 12 shillings. Even with a raise to four shillings a day, the worker would then be working only four hours for wages and eight hours making the boss's profits.

If the weavers were to organize a union and go on strike for another shilling a day, that would boost their income while simultaneously eating into the profits of the capitalist. What if the boss hired scabs and mustered all the forces of the capitalist state — the police, courts, armed forces, etc. — to break the union and cut the workers' pay as retribution? That pay cut would translate into increased profits.

It seems simple. The more one class

makes, the less the other one makes. The interests are inherently contradictory.

This is the 21st century, not the 19th. But despite what Akerson and King suggest, the relationship has not altered that much.

If it had, Akerson and King would have as their first priority restoring everything the UAW membership gave up during the 2009 bankruptcy.

What UAW workers are owed

First, all workers would be paid the same. The two-tier pay scale that has some workers making \$14 an hour for the same very hard work others do for \$28 would be abolished.

Then the company would raise the pay of workers who have not had a raise since 2005. It would again pay time-and-a-half after eight hours. It would give back breakeven (amounting to 40 hours a year) and paid holidays the workers sacrificed.

After that, all the workers who took buyouts after their plants closed would be offered their jobs back.

Is any of this being talked about? No way. The top brass at the three companies have made it clear: no pay raises.

GM even wants more health care cost-cutting. Nothing that could be defined as a "fixed cost" is even being discussed. Instead workers are being sold "profit sharing" — the more the bosses squeeze

the workers, the bigger the small portion that's kicked back to them — and bonuses tied to productivity and attendance.

Profits exceed total wages

On each vehicle GM has been making about \$2,800 in profit. The company claims total labor costs, including benefits, come to \$60 an hour and that an average of 30 hours' labor is needed to produce a car or truck. Labor costs are therefore only \$1,800.

So in an eight-hour day, the workers on the line spend about three hours and eight minutes earning wages and four hours and 52 minutes producing profit for the company. Shilling for shilling, dollar for dollar, workers are still being exploited.

The rate of exploitation is much higher in Mexico, Korea and other low-wage countries. A globalized system of multiple wage tiers pays workers in Asia and Latin America a fraction of what their counterparts in the UAW make. To again quote Marx, "Profit and wages remain as before, in inverse proportion."

Autoworkers and their leaders need to recognize that the relation between labor and capital is still fundamentally antagonistic. "Success" for one comes at the expense of the other. Workers and oppressed people of the world need to stop competing with each other and build a global resistance to capitalist exploitation. □

Financial jolts signal deeper capitalist crisis

Continued from page 1

the Democratic Party, but perhaps also to the Tea Party for being so tactically rigid that it failed to seize upon Obama's concessions on entitlements.

S&P downgrade all about entitlement cuts

All rating agencies depend on payment by the banks for their services. The S&P rating agency announced months ago that it wanted at least \$4 trillion cut from the deficit — and that cuts in entitlements were the key to achieving that goal. Republican speaker John Boehner and President Barack Obama were working on just such a deal when it was broken up by the ultra right and the Tea Party.

S&P made this clear. In their statement to the government explaining the move, they wrote that the downgrade was due to their "pessimism" about the prospect for deeper cuts.

They said they lowered the U.S. long-term rating because they believe that "prolonged controversy over raising the statutory debt ceiling" indicates that "further near-term progress on containing growth in public spending, especially on entitlements," will be contentious. It said that what the Congress and the administration agreed to "falls short of the amount we believe is necessary" to achieve financial stability in the next decade.

More explicitly, they complained that "the plan envisions only minor policy changes on Medicare and little change in other entitlements," whose "containment" they regard as "key to long-term fiscal sustainability."

Just to emphasize that the downgrade was a political attack on entitlements, the statement said that "We view the federal government's ... monetary credit attri-

butes, which form the basis for the sovereign debt rating, as broadly unchanged."

In other words, the financiers behind S&P are worried that if the government continues to fund the people's needs there may not be enough money in the future to pay the millionaire and billionaire bondholders and bankers their interest.

Debt-ceiling struggle a political war by the right wing

The debt-ceiling crisis was purely political in nature. The ultra-right Tea Party forces and the more traditional right-wing conservatives of the Republican Party have been in a bloc, waging a political war trying to cut back, if not destroy, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, and to undermine President Obama. As in any war, the right seized upon a point of advantage — the legislative requirement that Congress has to approve the debt ceiling of the government. They held entitlements hostage, threatening to force the government to default up until the final hour of the deadline.

The downgrade by Standard & Poor's was a pure act of retribution because the debt-ceiling deal did not cut deep enough. S&P included a threat of future downgrades if the politicians don't cut more.

Stock market plunge and fear of "double dip"

The subsequent plunge in the stock market, while affected by the downgrade, was fundamentally a reaction to the threat of a "double dip" or a new downturn in the capitalist economy.

The slowing growth of the U.S. economy — a growth rate of only 0.8 percent in the first half of this year — means that unemployment has gone up, in spite of

the official government statistics declaring that unemployment declined in the month of July from 9.2 percent to 9.1 percent.

Everyone knows that this is a vast understatement of true unemployment. There are at least 30 million workers either unemployed, under-employed or who have dropped out of the workforce altogether.

Cutting the government budget on spending for services, entitlements, public projects and the like only promises to aggravate the economic crisis in the U.S.

In Europe, the same process is gaining momentum. Greece, Portugal and Ireland have already been bailed out by the European Central Bank and the IMF. Now, Italy and Spain, much larger economies, are in crisis. The 90 largest banks in Europe hold \$425 billion in Italian government bonds alone. U.S. banks hold \$14.3 billion.

The bankers of Europe are demanding gigantic budget cuts from the indebted European countries as the price of a bailout. This will drag down the already slowing economies of Europe.

Bailing out banks, austerity aggravate economic crisis

The capitalists and their politicians are in a contradiction that has no way out. Because of the economic crisis, government revenues have fallen and the bankers' interest payments are being put at risk. The governments are stepping in to guarantee the bankers' payments.

But in order to guarantee the bankers their interest, the governments have to cut back spending. Cutting back spending on the people means the workers have less money in their pockets and the eco-

nomics crisis deepens.

In order to guarantee the banks their pound of flesh, the economic crisis must be made worse by austerity measures. That is what was behind the debt-ceiling struggle. That is what is behind the European debt crisis. The only way out of this vicious cycle is to fight the banks and bondholders and put jobs and workers' needs first.

New layoffs that would come in the wake of a new capitalist crisis could threaten a collapse. A financial crisis in Europe that spread to the U.S. could trigger global crisis. All these calculations were part of the wild sell-off of stocks.

From capitalist impasse to downturn

The working class must take these warning signals to heart.

For the past two years of so-called "recovery," the capitalist system has been in a state of impasse. It has been held up from crashing by massive government bailouts of the banks and government spending in general. That is the basis of the debt crisis, not only in the U.S. but in Europe and Japan. While there was no further downturn, the capitalist economy was unable to grow at anything but a snail's pace. While the corporations have been piling up profits, not a dent has been made in the mass unemployment.

Now the profit system is in danger of sliding from the impasse to a downturn. The bosses have invested in job-killing technology. They have speeded up workers, forced them to work every single second they are on the job, cut their hours to the bone — making them work part time or be temporary workers. Production goes up, but with fewer and fewer workers.

The economy is now nearing the same

Verizon strikers take on corporate giant

By Kathy Durkin

In the largest U.S. strike in four years, 45,000 union members took to the picket lines from Massachusetts to Virginia on Aug. 7 after their contract with Verizon Communications expired. The courageous strikers, who belong to the Communication Workers union and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, refuse to go back to work until they have a decent contract.

Ninety-one percent of the 35,000 CWA members and a vast majority of the 10,000 IBEW members voted to strike in late July. They took this action after Verizon refused to back down on nearly 100 concessions it has been demanding from its workforce since June 22, when bargaining began.

The CWA website explains, "CWA and IBEW have decided to take the unprecedented step of striking until Verizon stops its Wisconsin-style tactics and starts bargaining seriously," referring to how Wisconsin officials pushed through union-busting, anti-worker laws.

"Even at the 11th hour as contracts were set to expire, Verizon continues to seek to strip away 50 years of collective bargaining gains. Following the game plan of Wisconsin, Verizon is trying to destroy the collective bargaining process by refusing to engage seriously on the issues," said Candice Johnson, CWA communications director.

IBEW International President Edwin D. Hill stressed, "[Verizon] turned their backs on any attempts to reach a reason-

able settlement. We cannot stand by while one of the richest, most successful corporations in the world joins the race to decimate the 'middle class' of this country." He continued, "[A]t this point, we had no choice."

Verizon officials insist on demands that would devastate the workers' standard of living, eliminate hard-won benefits and override their union rights. They seek to end all job security provisions, eliminate disability benefits for employees injured at work and take away paid holidays, such as Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Sick days would be limited to five a year for current employees and would end for new hires. Regular raises would be eliminated. Pensions would be frozen for current workers and nonexistent for future employees.

Due to past militant struggles, the workers don't pay health care premiums. The company's aim is to institute a health plan that would cost the workers and retirees thousands of dollars — despite earlier contractual guarantees made to them. The company also maintains its insistence on outsourcing work to low-wage, non-union contractors here and abroad.

The message of fightback must be carried to work places, community centers, housing projects, churches and street corners in working-class areas, among all races and nationalities, to build a fighting movement. City halls, statehouses and the federal government as well as corporations must feel the pressure and the anger of the people.

The capitalists are sitting on trillions of dollars in cash. But they won't hire, are lowering wages and are getting ready to fire more workers if the economic slowdown turns into full-scale contraction. The banks are getting hundreds of billions of dollars in interest payments from governments at every level. The Pentagon and military corporations are getting trillions of dollars to pay for three wars.

Those funds should be used to pay for jobs programs and social needs, not to further enrich the already super-rich.

Socialist fighters, trade union militants, community activists, radicals and progressive organizers must come together as a matter of urgency to build a national fightback movement to combat the crisis.

In the 1930s the Unemployment Councils organized workers and tenants under the slogan "Don't Starve, Fight!" They had a program for jobs and income. Today's movement needs a similar fighting approach and a determination to organize at the grassroots level for struggle.

It is necessary for the movement to win victories at whatever level is possible. The program can include the fight for jobs, above all, in the midst of the worst capitalist crisis since the 1930s. But it can also include defending unions, collective bargaining and the rights of undocumented workers; it can fight for food, food stamps and housing; it can oppose foreclosures and evictions, budget cuts and school closings. In other words, it can defend the interests of the workers and oppressed wherever they are under attack. □



Verizon strikers in Philadelphia.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Verizon demands \$20K in concessions per worker

Verizon has not moved one iota from its intransigent stance and has cancelled all negotiating sessions since midnight on Aug. 6 when the contract expired.

The company's demands amount to \$1 billion per year in concessions, which is \$20,000 per worker.

The company is promoting the spin, as Hill points out, "that it needs to make itself competitive in the changing telecommunications industry." In other words, the workers must make huge concessions so that Verizon's labor costs equal those of non-union workers in the company and in the industry. This is a convenient cover for the corporation's mega-profit-making and exploitation of its workers — whose labor has created all of Verizon's wealth.

The strikers are in the unionized land-line division of Verizon's workforce, and they have lost one-half of their members in the last 10 years. The workers in the other main division — Verizon Wireless — are not unionized, except for 70 New York City CWA wireless technicians, who are also on strike. Most of the wireless employees have no union because the company fiercely fought every one of their organizing drives, in violation of a "neutrality" agreement signed with the unions in 2000.

While demanding these drastic cutbacks, Verizon had revenue of more than \$100 billion in the last year and is making

record profits — \$20 billion over the last four years and more than \$6.9 billion in the first half of 2011. The company paid its top five executives \$258 million in the same period. Its chairperson, Ivan Seidenberg, received 300 times the average salary earned by workers.

Labor movement needs to get behind this strike

This strike is a spark that could embolden the working class and the labor movement at a time when the capitalist class is on a rampage to push back workers' gains — trying to take back everything that unionized workers have won — and to decimate their collective bargaining rights.

The ferocity with which Verizon is attacking the workers must be met by a mobilization of the labor movement. This strike is crucial in the unfolding class struggle, one that critically needs the active support of the entire labor movement — in both the public and private sectors.

CWA and IBEW members have vowed to stand up to this vast global monolith and fight back against an assault on their rights, as their public sector union brothers and sisters did in Wisconsin.

It would bolster this strike if public sector workers — who are under attack by reactionary anti-union forces — came out to support the Verizon workers.

In the current atmosphere of outright corporate hostility to labor, when the super-rich corporate owners and their governmental representatives have unleashed a war on public and private sector workers and their unions, unity among all workers in all industries and unions is critically needed.

The Verizon strikers are bravely standing up for all workers. Their principled actions and working-class solidarity are borne out by IBEW President Hill, who asserted, "This group of Verizon workers is prepared to make the strongest possible stand not just for their own contract but for workers everywhere by saying NO to the race to the bottom."

Repair technicians, FIOS installers and call center workers are picketing throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. They are walking picket lines and rallying at more than 100 Verizon locations in the New York/New Jersey area. Workers World newspaper encourages its readers and all those in the progressive movement to support the strike and join the picket lines. For locations, see cwa-union.org and ibew.org. □

level of Gross Domestic Product that it was at before the crisis, but with 10 million fewer workers on the job. This means fewer and fewer workers are producing more and more output and services in less and less time for lower and lower wages. All in order to increase profits. The profit system itself is in crisis. And the workers are being asked to suffer. There is no way out of this contradiction on the basis of the capitalist profit system.

Calling upon the capitalists to create jobs when they don't need more workers is an illusion. The only way to create jobs right now is for government to launch a huge jobs program. Which is exactly what the government refuses to do, given the obsession in the capitalist establishment about cutting spending and deficits.

Need a mass fight for jobs

Capitalist commentators of all types are aghast at the prospect of a new crisis arising in a situation of already-existing long-term mass unemployment. The demand for a jobs program is beginning to take on momentum even from bourgeois voices — from Times op-ed writer Paul Krugman to MSNBC news show host Chris Matthews, and many more.

President Obama has been virtually silent on a real jobs program that can begin to put the millions upon millions of workers back to work. And now there is the threat of a greater unemployment crisis.

The AFL-CIO leadership is beginning to stir on the question and has called for demonstrations around the country in early October. Other forces are joining in the call.

This is a positive, if long overdue, step. However, the working class, the community, students and all who need jobs and are affected by unemployment, directly or indirectly, need to mount a rank-and-file, militant movement to fight this economic crisis.

"With the capitalist system demonstrably unfair, it is useful, indeed refreshing, to see a Marxist analysis of globalization and its effects on working people. Fred Goldstein does exactly that."

—Howard Zinn, author of *A People's History of the United States*

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'Like water on a rock'

Efforts persist to free the Cuban 5

By Cheryl LaBash

Two important focal points are at hand in the struggle to free the Cuban Five. First is the pending habeas corpus appeal for a new trial for Gerardo Hernández. The other is the anticipated release and parole of René González.

Both events highlight the need to step up work inside the U.S. On Aug. 3 Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly of People's Power, wrote: "Now is the time to multiply — without letup — actions to demolish the wall of silence that has permitted Washington to perpetuate the injustice."

The Cuban Five — Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and René González — have been unjustly held in U.S. prisons since Sept. 12, 1998. The Supreme Court refused to consider their appeal, and the Obama administration recommended that the habeas corpus appeals be denied.

The Cuban Five are heroes. They should not have spent a moment in prison. Justice would release them immediately and send them home to Cuba. Although the obscenely excessive original life sentences were reduced on appeal for all but Hernández, his double-life-plus-15-years still stands.

Hernández was convicted of a charge even U.S. prosecutors admitted they could not prove — that he orchestrated the Feb. 24,



WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

Relatives of Cuban 5 meet with Friendshipment caravanistas in Havana.

1996, shutdown over international waters of two small planes out of Florida that intentionally and repeatedly violated Cuban airspace. This aspect of his defense was not handled properly, providing one argument for a new trial. Evidence shows that prominent reporters in Miami were on the U.S. government payroll, so they would publish anti-Cuba propaganda at the time of the trial, stoking public prejudice against the Cuban Five. (freethefive.org)

Cuban 5 families meet with Friendshipment caravanistas

On July 28 the 22nd Pastors for Peace Friendshipment caravan met with families of the Cuban Five in Havana.

Irma Sehwert, mother of René González, expressed her concern over a possible probation ruling for her son to be served in Miami. She said, "Rene would be at a higher peril in the streets of

Miami than in jail. Imagine, René living in Miami for three years. We would not be at ease for one minute." Attorneys are working to allow him to return to Cuba. Sehwert continued, "If not, we will keep you informed to see what you can do to protect him."

Among many action ideas discussed were Five for the Five, local activities for the Cuban Five on the fifth of each month; bringing their case to churches; letter writing to local newspapers; addressing an appeal to Michelle Obama; and approaching 9/11 families to do a joint YouTube video with Cuban Five families.

One of the most moving moments was when one of the family members described the unceasing terrorism directed against Cuba from the United States. Fifty years ago, he noted, young Cuban literacy teachers were lynched with barbed wire.

Parliaments, Nobel laureates, well-

known personalities like actor Danny Glover, and multi-million-member unions like Irish/Britain UNITE have called for freedom for the Cuban Five. Mountains have been scaled, banners dropped, petitions signed by millions of supporters, email campaigns and cards sent to U.S. elected officials calling attention to their case. Costly newspaper ads attempt to break through the media blockade to reveal that five innocent men are imprisoned in the U.S. for opposing terrorism — U.S.-based terrorism against their Cuban homeland.

Hernández reportedly characterizes the many efforts around the world for his freedom and that of his four brothers as "It's like water on a rock." Be the drop that breaks the hard rock.

For more information, go to anti-terroristas.cu, theCuban5.org or freethefive.org. □

Discussion in Havana

How people with disabilities fare in Cuba

By Cheryl LaBash
Havana

The 22nd Pastors for Peace Friendshipment Caravan and 2011 Venceremos Brigade gathered on July 29 to discuss gender issues with a panel from the Cuban National Center for Sex Education and the Federation of Cuban Women.

The situation of people with disabilities in Cuba was not on the agenda, but when a panelist rolled in using a wheelchair, we had to ask her. In the U.S., capitalist austerity is hitting people with disabilities hard, dismantling or cutting special transit, health care and schools for people with special needs.

Isabel Moya Richard is a journalism professor at the University of Havana. She is also the general director of the weekly print and online magazine "Mujeres" and serves on the national secretariat of the Federation of Cuban Women. This is what she told us:

"When people are asked what is the biggest thing gained from the revolution, they usually say, health, education, sports. And I say that the most important thing the revolution has given to the individual is dignity.

"In this sense, dignity for Cubans who live with disabilities is in three main areas:

"Protection from the point of view of health care and social security, legislation and [being able] to work with subjectivity because it is not only with political will. That is insufficient; prejudice is still something that has to be worked against.

"There are three nongovernmental organizations that work with people with disabilities. One is for people with physical or motor limitations. ANCI [National

Association of the Blind], which is very strong, is an association of people with visual impairment, and [the third is] for people who have auditory or hearing impairment.

"It is important for you to know that each one of these three organizations has within it a group or team that works with a gender perspective. So they are the ones who deal with the gender perspectives that mainstream women with disabilities; they work in collaboration with the Federation of Cuban Women.

"What are some of the issues, what are some of the problems that women with disabilities encounter in Cuba? Sometimes it is the right to be a mother. A part of society questions, 'Why should she be a mother? Can she be a mother?'

"Women who might have a speech and hearing impairment are demanding that at the moment of delivery there should be a nurse assisting them to communicate to the doctor what she is feeling, what she wants and what she doesn't want.

"Whatever disabilities a person has, even one who is blind without speech, they all have the right to education. They all have special educational plans.

"The empowerment of people with disability has to do with the right to educate themselves and enhance their self-esteem.

"I have a problem of lack of calcium. My little baby was born with a problem in her knee. They had to operate. When she was in fifth grade, she was operated on. It was a very delicate operation, and she could not go to school.

"Every day a teacher would go to our home and give her classes, for her alone and of course free of charge. The first day the teacher came to the home the child

was in her pajamas. The teacher said, 'Why do you need pajamas? Put on your uniform; we are having classes.' It was to have her feel that she was a student and give her dignity and meet her special needs." □

Isabel Moya says, 'Cuba gives us dignity!'

WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH



Boston crowd says,

'No war on Libya!'

A multinational audience packed the hall of St. Katherine Drexel Church in the heart of Boston's African-American community in Grove Hall on Aug. 6 to rally against the U.S./NATO war on Libya. Former U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney had recently returned from a fact-finding delegation to Libya to report the truth on the devastation there. The 200 people in attendance welcomed McKinney to the podium with a five-minute standing ovation.

McKinney described how the Libyan people defied U.S./NATO bombs to gather at a memorial site where U.S. bombs had killed Col. Gadhafi's daughter in 1986. She called the aggression "a war on



Myia X welcomes McKinney.

Africa" and "a war on poor and working people and African people" around the globe, including in the U.S.

Minister Don Mohammad of Mosque 11, Nation of Islam, opened the program, which was co-chaired by Bishop Felipe Teixeira, OFSJC, Diocese of St. Francis of Assisi, CCA and Myia X of the Women's Fightback Network and SistaCipher. Other speakers included Libyan

graduate student Khalifa Elderbak and Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center. Organizational solidarity statements were contributed by Marilyn Levin, national co-coordinator of the United National Antiwar Committee;

From U.S. to Latin America & Africa

Solidarity with Libya grows

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Although the corporate-controlled media in the U.S. has been full of propaganda against the Libyan people and their government, international solidarity with that North African state grows daily.

Since the bombing campaign initiated on March 19 by the Pentagon and NATO has failed to weaken the resolve of Tripoli, false reports of rebel advances have become even more absurd.

On Aug. 5 the rebel Transitional National Council (TNC) claimed Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi's youngest son was killed in a NATO airstrike. However, Khamis Gadhafi, in charge of one of the leading military brigades against the imperialists and their allies, was unharmed in the recent wave of attacks.

Solidarity meetings draw crowds across U.S.

Inside the U.S., where the Obama administration and its diminishing congressional supporters have sought to shape public opinion in favor of war against Libya, rallies and mass meetings across the country are growing in attendance and militancy.

In Los Angeles on Aug. 5, more than 300 people came out to hear Cynthia McKinney, who recently visited the war-ravaged country with the Dignity delegation. John Parker of the International Action Center and Rosie Martinez of the southern California trade union movement also spoke.

The audience was mainly people from the oppressed African-American and Latino/a communities. This meeting confirms widespread opposition to the war on Libya by key sectors that have been the electoral base of the Obama administration and the Democratic Party.

Boston held a similar meeting on Aug. 6, at which people from the African-American, Haitian, Cape Verdean and Latino/a communities joined with labor unionists and anti-war forces in packing a hall to hear the former Georgia congressperson describe the resistance of the Libyan people to NATO's bombs.

In Detroit the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice is building a citywide meeting for Aug. 27 at the University of Michigan Detroit Center. The event has generated excitement since it will provide people with an opportunity to hear directly from McKinney on the illegal war being waged against this oil-rich African state that has long supported continental unity and development.

The Michigan Chapter of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, Freedom Road Socialist Organization, the Green Party of Detroit and Michigan, and Workers World Party Detroit Branch are co-sponsoring the Detroit meeting.



Carole Helas, of Fanmi Lavalas of Boston; and Andre Francois, of the Boston School Bus Union.

Askia Toure, activist and pioneer of the Black Arts Movement; African drum-

ming by Doumafis and Alex; Ti'Ella G of SistaCipher; and Op from hip-hop group The Foundation Movement contributed cultural solidarity.

U.S. Congressperson John Conyers Jr. of Detroit is a co-plaintiff in a lawsuit citing the Obama administration for violating the War Powers Act, which says the White House cannot wage war without the approval of Congress. Conyers has been invited to attend the Aug. 27 meeting.

Cuba, Venezuela, Zimbabwe condemn NATO

Although in July the Libya Contact Group, a coalition of NATO states and their allies committed to regime change, recognized the Western-backed TNC opposition forces as the legitimate political force inside Libya, a growing number of organizations and governments are expressing support for the Libyan people in their struggle against this imperialist war.

On Aug. 4 Cuban President Raul Castro Ruz received Libyan Minister of Finance and Planning Abdulhafid M. Zlitni in Havana. Zlitni carried a message from Gadhafi detailing the government's plans to battle the campaign of isolation fostered by the U.S./NATO states.

According to Granma International on Aug. 4, "Raul reiterated Cuba's most energetic condemnation of the NATO military aggression against Libya, in particular the bombings of civilian facilities resulting in the death of innocent people. He also demanded an immediate cessation of these acts in order to facilitate moves toward a peaceful solution, with full respect for the country's independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty over its natural resources and the self-determination of the Libyan people."

Join Cynthia McKinney to hear her: Report from Libya on the Impact of the U.S. /NATO War in Africa

See the cities and upcoming dates listed below in a national 21-city-tour which began on July 7 organized by International Action Center and others in coordination with many anti-war and community organizations.

(Full listing with time, and place and coordinators at www.IACenter.org)

Aug. 13 Saturday **Millions March in Harlem**
Malcolm X Blvd and 110 Street assemble 10 am

Aug. 14 Sunday **Rocky Mount, NC** 3 p.m.
Booker T. Washington Theater, 170 E. Thomas St.

Aug. 14 Sunday **Durham, NC** 7 p.m.
St Joseph's AME Church, 2521 Fayetteville St.

Aug. 19 Friday **St. Louis**

Aug. 20 Saturday **Pittsburgh**

Aug. 22 Monday **Cleveland**

Aug. 25 Thursday **Baltimore**

Aug. 26 Friday **Philadelphia**

Aug. 27 Saturday **UofM Detroit Center** 4 p.m.
3663 Woodward Ave., at M.L King Blvd.

Aug. 28 Sunday **Denver**

"The Cuban president also expressed his support of efforts being made by African Union leaders to achieve that." The African Union has opposed the rebel insurgency and the U.S./NATO bombings since the beginning of the war.

On Aug. 1 Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez said the Bolivarian Revolution would not recognize the rebel groups claiming to be the legitimate government in Libya. He defended Gadhafi as Libya's legitimate leader and urged the government to stand firm against the rebels and the imperialist forces.

The Venezuelan president said of Gadhafi: "I respect him a lot. He's resisting there. Long live Libya. Live and be victorious. We're with you." (alarabiya.net, Aug. 3)

An al-Arabiya article reported, "President Chávez — one of Latin America's most outspoken critics of Washington's foreign policy — has repeatedly condemned what he calls 'indiscriminate bombing' by the U.S. and its allies in Libya, saying their military attacks are unjustified and will only unleash more bloodshed."

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe on Aug. 8 blasted the U.S./NATO war against Libya, calling the alliance a "terrorist organization." The president of this Southern African state, whose ruling party fought a war of national liberation for its independence from British settler-colonialists during the 1960s and 1970s, noted that his country must protect its people and territory in light of imperialist aggression on the continent.

"Zimbabwe must be in a state of preparedness," said Mugabe. "It is clear that NATO wants to topple Gadhafi. It is not protecting civilians as it claims." According to Mugabe the war is only designed to seize the largest oil reserves in Africa. (Deutsche Press-Agentur, Aug. 8)

Journalists hit bombing of Libya TV

In London a leading media organization, the International News Safety Institute, called for an investigation into NATO attacks on Libyan television satellite dishes, which were bombed during the first week of August. INSI asked U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to assess whether the airstrike, which reportedly killed three people and injured 15, was a violation of the 2006 Security Council resolution prohibiting attacks on journalists.

On Aug. 3 the International Federation of Journalists also condemned the attacks on Libyan television and requested an investigation.

NATO claims the attacks on media outlets are in line with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973, which has served as the pseudo-legal rationale for the war. INSI director Rodent Pincer said these bombing operations could not be justified "on the basis that you disagree with the point of view of the news organizations. NATO forces in Libya are acting under a Security Council mandate to protect civilians and journalists are civilians." (Associated Press, Aug. 5)

In early August, a delegation of fashion

Continued on page 11

LA rallies build unity to confront war drive



WW PHOTO

Cynthia McKinney painted a picture of the real Libya at two events in Los Angeles on Aug. 7 where she exposed the U.S./NATO terrorist bombing campaign against Libya. These were part of the now 21-city tour empowering the anti-war movement nationwide to not only fight against imperialist wars, but demand money from those wars be used to stop budget cuts and for jobs, health care and education. McKinney and the organizers built the type of unity necessary for ending imperialist wars during stops at a local church run by an activist pastor and at the second largest union local in California.

The Service Employees Local 721 meeting drew a standing-room-only crowd of 300. The All African Peoples Revolutionary Party-S (AAPRP-S) and the International Action Center jointly organized the meeting, which drew backing from Black nationalist to immigrant rights and Filipino organizations. Speaker after speaker spelled out that the demands to recognize Libyan self-determination and the immediate cessation of bombing should be the primary focus of the anti-

war and social justice movement

Jamiealita Johnston Muhammad of the IAC and Dedon Kamathi of the AAPRP-S chaired the diverse program. A welcoming committee of the Local 721 Latino Caucus, including former Vice President Rosie Martinez, Marva Burgess and Lawrence Reyes, head of the Puerto Rican Alliance in Los Angeles, kicked off the theme of international working-class solidarity. BAYAN-USA Vice Chair Kuusela Hilo made the connection between imperialist threats and destruction in the Philippines and in Libya. The UNIA-ACL extended the legacy of Marcus Garvey to apply to the self-determination and sovereignty of African people in Libya. Others contributing were Workers World Party speaker Gloria Verdieu and spoken word artist Mike Martinez.

People took turns sampling the bountiful food donated by Reza Pour, a union activist and board member of the local Pacifica station, KPFK. The Black August Committee of Los Angeles inspired with a talk and spirited chants like "We are all Africans."

— John Parker

— Frank Neisser

Talk to WWP forum

'Debt-ceiling crisis, true and false'

Following are excerpts of a talk to a July 28 Workers World Party forum in New York by WWP Secretariat member Larry Holmes. See the entire talk at workers.org.

The debt ceiling crisis is not solved. The Republicans and Democrats and the White House have not agreed on what to do. There may be some temporary political solution they patch together so that the country doesn't default. But even if they do that, it will be temporary.

I want to blow up a couple of myths. There's the notion that this is a manufactured crisis, this debt ceiling thing. And it's true — it's about the two parties posturing about the elections. And of course, we know the money's there, the trillions of dollars they spent on Afghanistan and Iraq and now Libya, and the trillions of dollars in tax breaks that Bush and others gave to the rich. We can show how they could eliminate the debt without attacking the workers.

But it's a real crisis, a consequence of the crisis of the worldwide capitalist system. The crisis of overproduction, which means that the economy slows down to nothing and there's no expansion. Workers are laid off, and there's trillions of dollars less in tax revenues. Add to that the many trillions of dollars that governments, particularly this government, have poured into the banks and into the financial system to prevent the system from crashing. As far as the U.S. government goes, that's somewhere between 11 and 14 trillion dollars — close to what they say is the deficit.

This debt-ceiling debacle is really another big attack on the workers. Both parties are in agreement. The Democrats have caved in. Obama a few weeks ago said "I'll put Medicaid and Medicare and Social Security on the table, as long as you consider raising taxes on the rich." That's really great for the working class and the oppressed — take everything away, as long as we can talk about raising some taxes on billionaires. But it turns out that raising taxes is not on the table.

All the plans cut between 2 and 4 trillion dollars. They talk a lot about discretionary funds. Those discretionary funds are a lot of the monies that states

and municipalities depend on. All of us fighting our budget struggles on a local basis should know that more's to come.

The media pundits say the markets are not going to like it, because two to four trillion dollars is not enough. You remember when the commission that Bush empowered came back with their report and they called for cuts in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. And everybody distanced themselves from them, even Obama. Now every suggestion that the commission had has been made mainstream. Those who call themselves liberals are saying, "We've got to stop the default by cutting. Let's not talk about taxing the rich."

Consider their problem in trying to save capitalism. They want to solve the crisis on the backs of the workers by cutting trillions of dollars, but if they do that then workers won't have any jobs or money and won't be able to buy anything. That will make the capitalist crisis worse.

Those in the ruling class who want to play the racism and fascism card know if they're going to bring on a depression, they're going to need scapegoats. And here we go with Muslims and Arabs and lesbian, gay, bi and trans, and women, and immigrants, and young Black people who get killed, like the young brother in San Francisco who got shot outside the BART station.

The working class is not mobilized. There may be a demonstration or people calling their member of Congress about save health care or Social Security but there's no big general strikes, no Tahrir Squares, not yet. Nothing emboldens these neo-fascists more than the workers not getting up and fighting.

We have got to help generate the fightback. It's got to be explicitly anti-capitalist. All who are being radicalized by this economic violence need to show that we're up to matching and defeating the neo-fascist elements.

On Sept. 17, the anniversary of the bailout after the whole capitalist system almost collapsed, there's going to be an occupation of Wall Street. What happens on Sept. 17 will give us a little glimpse of how it's going. We want to be part of it. Down with capitalism! □

WW forum:

'Building solidarity in the Philippines'

Workers World Party held a forum Aug. 6 in New York City on the theme "Eyewitness: Building Solidarity in the Philippines." The meeting featured three speakers who attended three important conferences in the Philippines in early July.

Melanie Dulfo, from Filipinas for Rights and Empowerment, spoke on the First General Assembly of the International Women's Alliance. Monica Moorehead, a Women's Fightback Network organizer and member of the newly formed IWA executive council, spoke on the deplorable conditions facing the Filipino people and the heroic resistance taking place in the Philippines. Lucy Pagoada, a Popular National Resistance Front in Honduras delegate, spoke on the International Migrant Alliance conference.

Moorehead showed footage of her visit to Kaingin Bukid, a poor urban area in Quezon City.

Also on the program was Teresa Gutierrez, a co-coordinator of the May 1st Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights, who called for solidarity with Guinean-born housekeeper Nafissatou Diallo. Diallo brought rape charges against former International Monetary Fund director Dominique Strauss-Kahn. Roccio Silverio, an International Action Center volunteer and Food Is a Right Campaign organizer, spoke on the local campaign to roll back food stamp cuts.

A strong delegation from the Filipino organization FiRE attended the meeting. To hear all the talks, go to workers.org.

— Workers World New York bureau

Eyewitness Philippines

'Squatters in our own country'



Poverty and pollution taint life along the Pasig River.

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

By Monica Moorehead

Based on a talk given at Workers World Forum, "Eyewitness: Building Solidarity in the Philippines," held Aug. 6 in New York City. Moorehead represented the Women's Fightback Network at the First General Assembly of the International Women's Alliance, an anti-imperialist coalition, held in Quezon City, Philippines, July 5-6. To hear the podcast of her talk, go to workers.org.

Before the Philippines became a U.S. neo-colony in 1898, it was colonized by Spain for hundreds of years and briefly occupied by Japan during World War II. It is home to close to 94 million people.

The national economy of the Philippines is controlled by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, under the guise of foreign debt, to the tune of \$60 billion at the end of 2010. Instead of providing jobs, arable land, education, health care, housing and more, the majority of public monies go toward paying just the interest of this endless debt service.

Eighty percent of the population — 69 million people — survive on less than \$2 a day. Forty-six million people are literally starving. The indigenous economy has been undermined by U.S. global conglomerates.

The minimum hourly wage in the Philippines is 43 pesos, or around \$10 a day for 10 hours of work. Factory workers receive an average wage of 25 pesos an hour, or 50 cents. The vast majority of factory workers are women in the garment and electronics industries concentrated in "special economic zones" created by foreign capital. Multinational corporations, especially from the U.S., are rabidly anti-union; in 2009, only 5 percent of the Philippine workers were unionized.

There is no national industry in the Philippines. The economy is dominated by the export of human beings or migrants. It has the largest migration of workers of any country — more than 4,000 people leave the Philippines daily to seek living wage jobs in 150 countries. This is forced displacement on a massive scale.

Filipina workers, as health care providers and domestic workers, are forced to go abroad to help their families survive. These workers have no kind of protection. They are forced to work endless hours for slave wages; are subject to domestic violence, including sexual abuse by bosses; no childcare, no health care or any other social services. This includes women migrant workers in the U.S. Human trafficking, especially the sex trade "industry," is a huge crisis for Filipinas, including children. Filipinas have the highest rate of sui-

cide and depression among Asians, according to Filipinas for Rights and Empowerment.

No education, no jobs

Six out of 10 people in the Philippines are under the age of 24. Public education is not free on any level. Tuition for one year of elementary education is 300 pesos, which does not include school uniforms, books or even an electric fan for your classroom despite the high heat and humidity.

High school students pay 400 pesos a year tuition. The average classroom size for all grades is between 42 and 60 students. Without a college diploma, you can't get a job even in call centers — a global phenomenon involving millions of low-wage workers, including those in the Philippines. Because of the dire poverty in the Philippines, armed security guards are stationed everywhere large groups of people, especially young people and workers, congregate.

The government tries to terrorize the well-organized, united mass movement with death squads, preventive detentions, kidnapping and torture. The Philippine government fears a justified rebellion against inhumane living conditions aggravated by the global capitalist crisis.

This writer took a tour of an urban squatters' area July 7 inhabited by about 4,000 people within a several-block radius. The tour was organized by the Gabriela women who live and organize among the poor communities. They offer services to these communities, especially for women regarding health care, sanitation, food nutrition and more. One resident told this reporter, "We have become squatters in our own country."

This urban area — Kaingin Bukid — has been scheduled for government demolition, but because of the people's resistance it is still standing, but just barely. Residents live next to the Pasig River which contains tons of domestic and industrial waste. Swimming in this water has caused a major outbreak of diarrhea among children.

During the monsoon period, flood waters rise above the banks and flood homes. There are no basements. The people either have to leave for a higher area or go to a third floor until the polluted water subsides and everything dries out.

Lack of health care is a big crisis. While there are government-run hospitals for the poor, there is a lack of medicine. Large numbers of young pregnant women, many of them teenagers, do not have access to reproductive services, including birth control, prenatal and neonatal care.

The resilience of the women who survive intolerable conditions on a daily basis was truly inspirational. □

Another reason to get out now

Afghan resistance shoots down U.S. copter

By Gene Clancy

Thirty members of the U.S. Special Forces were killed in Afghanistan in the deadliest day of the 10-year war for U.S. military personnel when insurgents shot down a Chinook helicopter on Aug. 6. The majority of those killed were from Navy Seal Team 6, the unit that killed Osama bin Laden in a night-time raid deep in Pakistan. Eight members of the Afghan National Army were also killed when rebels destroyed the massive double-rotor transport helicopter with a rocket.

The Taliban claimed they had downed the helicopter while it was taking part in a raid on a house where insurgents were gathered in the province of Wardak. It said wreckage was strewn at the scene.

The Navy Seals had already killed eight people on the ground and were trying to take off when the helicopter was hit.

Meanwhile, NATO reported that four service members were killed on Aug. 7 in

two separate insurgent attacks in southern Afghanistan and the country's eastern region.

Also, the office of the French president said two French soldiers were killed and five wounded in a clash with insurgents in Afghanistan's northeastern Tagab Valley.

At a time of collapsing public support for the Afghan war in the U.S., where the conflict is increasingly seen as too expensive and unwinnable, the deaths of so many soldiers are likely to increase pressure on the U.S. government to get out of Afghanistan.

Earlier the same day the helicopter was downed, Afghan police said a NATO air strike killed eight civilians in southern Helmand province. Civilian casualties caused by foreign troops hunting Taliban fighters and other insurgents have been extensively documented. The victims of the air strike in Helmand were members of a family that had fled fighting in neighboring Uruzgan province.

U.S. officials, including President Barack Obama, have mourned and lauded Navy Seal Team 6. The Seals are supposed to be the "best of the best" of U.S. Special Forces. Many in the rest of the world have a different opinion. A look at the Seals' history shows why.

It's true that the Seals and other Special Forces are different from the masses of working-class youth who join the military, often driven by desperate economic and social influences. The Special Forces are meticulously screened and trained, not only in military effectiveness, but in unwavering loyalty to the interests of the U.S. ruling elite.

The Central Intelligence Agency began using Seals in covert operations in early 1963. The Seals were involved in the CIA-sponsored Phoenix Program that targeted sympathizers of the Vietnamese National Liberation Front for capture and assassination. Often these were labor and community organizers, that is, civilians.

Since then Seals have carried out assassinations in Grenada, in Iraq during the first Gulf War, in Panama and Somalia, just to mention a few. What they are "best" at is acting as hired killers at the service of U.S. imperialism.

Shooting down this helicopter by the Afghan insurgents is a severe setback to U.S. war policy there.

U.S. policy planners have been counting on Special Forces like the Seals to rescue them from their increasingly precarious positions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Seals' killing of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan, a gross violation of international law and of Pakistan's sovereignty, was trumpeted as a victory and harbinger of success in the so-called "war on terrorism."

The success of the Afghan resistance in fighting back against the U.S. war and occupation of their country is not only a victory for the Afghan people, it is an inspiration for poor and working people around the world. □

Racist killing sparks rebellion in Britain

Continued from page 1

munity. Residents demonstrated outside the police station on Aug. 6. It was reported that soon after the protest, several youth hotwired two police vehicles and drove them to the center of the nearby business district, where they were set afire.

Later, according to media reports, hundreds of others began to pelt police, empty stores and eventually burn down numerous establishments in the area. News of the rebellion spread throughout the city and the world.

The next night, other sections of London and its suburbs erupted in similar unrest. In Brixton, Enfield, Chingford Mount-Waltham Forest, Dalston, Edmonton, Islington, Oxford Circus, Ponder's End and Walthamstow, youth attacked the police and symbols of exploitation. In various areas affected by the rebellions, youth hit

the Kingsland Shopping Center in Dalston, Curry's, William Hill, Nandos, Morley's Department Store and T-Mobile in Brixton along with Blockbusters, Vision Express, JD Sports and other businesses in Tottenham. (London Telegraph, Aug. 8)

During the following day in Hackney, youth clashed with riot police after taking over a lorry full of building materials that were used as defense against the cops. In Peckham and Lewisham, youth reportedly fought running battles with the police and at least one bus was set on fire.

Police escalated their patrols and aggressive tactics in response to the youth unrest. It was reported by Scotland Yard that more than 200 people had been arrested by Aug. 8.

The police and the media immediately began to portray Mark Duggan as a criminal and a gangster. He was blamed by the authorities for causing his own death by firing first at the cops. (Daily Mail, Aug. 8)

Duggan's family said he was unarmed and that the killing was totally unjustified. Rather than accepting responsibility for Duggan's death, police called those involved in the protests and rebellions "criminals" who now face arrest and prosecution.

Despite past rebellions, gov't fails to address national question

Observers in London have compared these rebellions to those that swept the Black and Asian communities in England from the late 1970s through the mid-1980s. In 1981, rebellions swept Brixton and other sections of Greater London and spread to the rest of England.

In Tottenham in 1985, a rebellion erupted after a Black woman died during a police raid. A white police officer was later stabbed to death during the unrest, which lasted several days and resulted in significant property damage.

Since 1958 in Notting Hill, when white racist mobs invaded Black communities attacking homes and residents, the British government has failed to adequately address the national question. In recent years as the economic crisis of world capitalism has impacted urban areas throughout Europe, rebellions have re-emerged as a form of resistance and protest.

Faced with worsening unemployment and social conditions for the working class, mostly young people in the suburbs of France, where many African and Arab immigrants live, erupted in rebellion in

2005 and 2006 in response to police brutality and institutional racism.

In Britain there have been some cosmetic changes to the labor market since the rebellions of the 1980s, with more Black and Asian people in media and business. However, police brutality and misconduct remain a major source of complaints in the country's urban areas.

The onslaught of the economic crisis of 2007-2008 has hit Britain hard, prompting the central bank and the government to shore up the financial sector. Meanwhile, the conservative-led government of David Cameron has mandated massive social service cuts. With dissatisfaction spreading among workers and youth, the situation is volatile.

Significance of the rebellions

Such rebellions could occur anywhere in the industrialized capitalist states. Rising unemployment and impoverishment of oppressed and working-class people provide fuel for social unrest. The regime implements its economic decisions with-

out consulting working people and youth.

The growing agitation and unrest within the imperialist West are coupled with the rising tide of struggle, particularly in Africa and the Middle East. The U.S./NATO wars against Afghanistan and Libya have only provided more defeats for world imperialism in its desperate attempt to maintain its dominance over the majority of humanity.

Workers and the oppressed must strengthen the existing mass organizations and trade unions in their fight to end the system of exploitation and oppression. To many it is becoming quite obvious that capitalism and imperialism have nothing to offer working people and the nationally oppressed throughout the world.

People want and need jobs, incomes, health care, pensions, quality education and life without political and state repression. When these movements and organizations come together they can bring about major advances in the fight to end exploitation and oppression and to realize a socialist future for humanity. □

From U.S. to Latin America & Africa Solidarity with Libya grows

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models from Italy visited Tripoli as an act of solidarity with the government. Libya was formerly an Italian colony.

NATO & rebels in disarray

Criticism against the war is also building within NATO countries. In a recent article published in Gulf News, Simon Jenkins notes, "Britain's half-war against Libya is careering onward from reckless gesture to full-scale fiasco. As it reaches six months' duration, every sensible pessimistic forecast has turned out true and every jingoistic boast false." (gulfnnews.com, Aug. 8)

Whether the imperialist states withdraw sooner or later from Afghanistan and Libya, their failures in these theaters of war have exposed the contradictions in the military strategy of the U.S. and Europe. Facing the worst capitalist economic crisis since the Great Depression, the Western alliance seems incapable of moving beyond its political dilemma.

It will take an international movement of the working class and oppressed to end all imperialist wars and to rebuild the economies of the world. Capitalism is proving incapable of providing the basic needs of the people in the industrialized states as well as the developing countries. □

MUNDO OBRERO

La República Dominicana de hoy: Entrevista con Narciso Isa Conde

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la sociedad que quisiera un cambio de rumbo para el país.

Aunque generalmente todo el descontento, o buena parte del descontento apunta contra el gobierno de turno, realmente estamos empeñados en hacer conciencia de que la cosa hay que llevarla a más profundidad en término de reflexión.

Y que en lugar de gobiernos del PRD, del PLD, ambos buscando alianzas con el viejo balaguerismo ya muy desacreditado, muy destartado, muy desarticulado, pero contaminado de ese autoritarismo, hay que hacer una negación categórica de esto a favor de un poder del pueblo, de un gobierno del pueblo a partir de la insumisión, de la insurgencia de las bases populares del país frente a esta realidad.

La incapacidad negativa que tiene el poder para responder a esas demandas populares, que son las mismas desde hace muchos años, indican que el tema crucial

es el tema del poder en el país. Estamos trabajando intensamente en dirección a la rebeldía, a generalizar la rebeldía con múltiples formas: desobediencia civil, expresión de indignación de la sociedad, de paralizaciones, de huelgas, en fin, todas las modalidades posibles para apuntar en dirección al tema del poder.

Lo que puede hacer el movimiento progresista en EEUU

Es muy importante dar a conocer la realidad de la R.D. Hay que dar a conocer además que no se trata solamente de Leonel Fernández y el PLD como partido de gobierno, sino que es un sistema. Que estamos frente a una dictadura institucionalizada con 2 polos, el PLD y el PRD. Expresar solidaridad con nuestras luchas, movilizarse contra los símbolos del poder dominicano allá en los EEUU: el consulado, la embajada, los representantes de esas fuerzas dominantes aquí, es muy importante para nosotros. □

La República Dominicana de hoy: Entrevista con Narciso Isa Conde

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Narciso Isa Conde es analista político marxista, escritor y veterano de las luchas contra la dictadura de Trujillo y la invasión yanqui de la República Dominicana en 1965. Durante la revolución de abril de 1965, él representó al Partido Comunista en el comando político de la revolución encabezado por el Coronel Francisco Caamaño. Su larga carrera política incluye haber sido objeto de encarcelamiento, persecución y exilio durante el Gobierno de Joaquín Balaguer. Isa Conde es ahora un líder del Movimiento Caamañista (MC) y parte de la Presidencia colectiva del Movimiento Continental Bolivariano.

Isa Conde habló con Berta Joubert-Ceci del Partido WW/Mundo Obrero sobre el marco político y socioeconómico del paro de 24 horas que paralizó el comercio y el tráfico en la República Dominicana el pasado 11 de julio. La acción fue llamada por el Foro Social Alternativo, que incluye unas 50 organizaciones como respuesta a la aguda catástrofe producida por la crisis económica capitalista en todo el mundo y las supuestas medidas correctivas adoptadas por el Gobierno dominicano. Lo siguiente son respuestas de Isa Conde.

Panorama de la situación en la R.D.

En la República Dominicana estamos sufriendo las consecuencias de las imposiciones neoliberales desde hace ya varias décadas. Es un país intervenido por el FMI, por el BM y por los EEUU en todos los órdenes. EEUU ejerce ese control por mecanismos económicos y financieros.

Todos los aspectos de la vida nacional están tocados. La propia constitución de la República que recientemente se aprobó, es hecha a la medida de esa estrategia neoliberal. Es una constitución privatizadora, concentradora del poder en el presidente de la república y negadora de los derechos sociales colectivos.

Entre el 35 al 40 por ciento del presupuesto nacional está comprometido en el pago de la deuda externa. El gobierno ha suplido los déficits fiscales muy graves con más endeudamiento, lo cual compromete la economía nacional en el futuro de manera muy grave. Aquí se espera un año todavía de empeoramiento de la situación, de mayor deterioro económico y social.

Pero aparte de todo esto, la R.D. ha sufrido la consecuencia de un proceso privatizador que tocó todo lo que fue el patrimonio nacional, heredado de la tiranía de Trujillo. Lo que fue la concentración del poder económico de Trujillo, que estaba expresado en el Consejo Estatal del Azúcar, la Corporación de Empresas Industriales y en la Corporación Dominicana de Electricidad ha sido privatizado con consecuencias terribles. Prácticamente tenemos un sector azucarero desarticulado totalmente. Y lo que están haciendo prácticamente es repartiendo a precio de vacas muertas, la enorme riqueza territorial que acumuló el Consejo Estatal del Azúcar. Hubo un robo tremendo alrededor de todo esto y se combina neoliberalismo con corrupción, van de la mano.

Tenemos una partidocracia también que se ha conformado alrededor de esas prácticas del desfalco, de la corrupción, de

la apropiación del patrimonio estatal, del patrimonio natural del país, de la riqueza natural del país, del tráfico de influencias, etc. Una élite de esos partidos ha establecido un sistema bipartidista, una especie de dictadura bipolar institucionalizada, con el Partido de la Liberación Dominicana (PLD) por un lado, ya profundamente derechizado, — fue el partido de Bosch — y el Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD), el que fuera de Peña Gómez, también igualmente derechizado, corrompido, neoliberalizado. Me refiero a las estructuras de mando, pero secuestran y convierten la ciudadanía en clientela política.

Eso también se articula con la asociación con los diferentes grupos oligárquicos, con los nuevos grupos económicos y también con la apertura total en términos de proceso al capital extranjero, a las corporaciones transnacionales.

Hay un proceso de saqueo, de depredación en el marco de un modelo de acumulación que ahora pone mucho acento en la apropiación por los grandes consorcios mineros de las riquezas mineras del país. Especialmente el caso de la Barrick Gold y de la Uni Gold que están detrás de los grandes yacimientos de oro de aquí y de Haití en la zona fronteriza.

Pero igualmente también revestida de concesiones mineras, hay muchísimas concesiones de territorios en toda la costa del país, entre ellos se calcula que el 60% de las costas playeras del país han sido concedidas particulares como concesiones mineras sin que sea trabajada minería, lo que indica que hay un mecanismo que evade algunas reglamentaciones de las reservas forestales del país, de las áreas protegidas. Las evaden a través de las concesiones mineras.

Ahora, el estado dominicano, junto a las medidas de carácter neoliberal, en término de flexibilización como ellos le llaman laboral, de libre mercado, del TLC con Centroamérica y EEUU, llamado el RD-CAFTA, ha afectado seriamente las posibilidades de expansión de la producción nacional. Han cooptado los productores nacionales.

Por otro lado han empobrecido extraordinariamente a la sociedad, ciertamente va a haber 60% de la población en condiciones de pobreza. Las cifras oficiales ofrecen un desempleo del 16%, pero eso está hecho sobre las bases de un cálculo engañoso. Eso se refiere al desempleo absoluto y aquí hay un 53% de la población en la economía marginal, con trabajos temporeros, inestable, sin la menor seguridad en términos de trabajo.

Todos los servicios básicos están deteriorados. En la salud, la R.D. está entre los últimos lugares, creo que somos superados sólo por Haití, también en materia de educación. Ahora con el tema del cólera, todo el sistema de salud está desbordado, no tiene capacidad para darle respuesta.

Está la privatización de la seguridad social, la llamada RS, administradora del sistema de salud, que son intermediarias privadas y se llevan la mayor parte, junto con los bancos que manejan las pensiones. Hay alrededor de 130 mil millones en manos de los bancos privados de las pensiones de los trabajadores/as y ellos operan con ese capital.

Igualmente la administradora de riesgos laborales intentó recientemente una estafa,

disponer de alrededor de 10 mil millones de pesos de esos fondos queriéndose reparar entre la cúpula sindical amarilla, el estado y los empresarios, aduciendo que no se estaba utilizando en estos momentos. Ha sido detenido por la protesta social.

En ese marco, con todos los servicios públicos fundamentales deteriorados, el caso de la privatización del sistema eléctrico, el sistema energético nacional ha sido realmente catastrófico porque de hecho, el estado dominicano ha tenido que multiplicar el subsidio por 16 veces en relación como cuando estaba estatizado.

La tarifa se ha elevado ostensiblemente, ellos alegan todo el tema del combustible, realmente los combustibles son fuente de impuesto para el gobierno, más de la mitad del precio del combustible en R.D. es impuesto que capta el gobierno. El sistema de impuesto ha sido cada vez más modificado en dirección a los impuestos del consumo en lugar de los impuestos a la propiedad o a la renta.

Y todo esto ha producido un empobrecimiento de los seres humanos y de los recursos naturales del país que han sido apropiados por sectores minoritarios poderosos. En esas condiciones han crecido las tensiones sociales y explica la reacción plebiscitaria del pueblo dominicano en torno a este llamamiento a huelga.

Estaban dadas todas las condiciones y todavía más. Aquí hay un grado de indignación, un grado de descontento que en algún momento puede incluso crecer, estallar en múltiples formas.

El problema es un problema del sistema político, del modelo neoliberal, del capitalismo en crisis. La respuesta que dan a la crisis del capitalismo es la que le conviene al capitalismo mundial. Y por eso todas van en detrimento de la población trabajadora, de los sectores más desvalidos. Intentan acentuar todas las opresiones, no solo la opresión de clase, sino también de género, el adultocentrismo, el racismo, el antihaitianismo, para sobreexplotar a los/as haitianos/as.

Un sistema de dos partidos

El PRD es la misma cosa que el PLD; ambos están amarrados a las políticas neoliberales, al mismo capitalismo dependiente del país, y en el tema de la corrupción son cómplices de todo el sistema de impunidad. Ambos tienen el dominio del sistema que es muy antidemocrático, muy excluyente. Entre los dos controlan prácticamente todas las instituciones del país. En el sistema electoral ahora domina el PLD, el partido de gobierno, pero comparte el dominio con el PRD.

La policía nacional es una policía criminal, desacreditada, es una organización mafiosa. La dirección nacional antidroga por igual. Está mezclada en todos los negocios turbios. Las fuerzas armadas están también penetradas y asociadas a diferentes vertientes del narcotráfico.

Transnacionales explotadoras de oro

La Barrick Gold se presenta como una empresa con base en Canadá pero la familia Bush tiene mucho poder en ella. Y los grupos económicos más poderosos de Chile vinculados a Pinochet también. Es la empresa minera en el tema del oro, del cobalto, del titanio, más agresiva a escala mundial, una empresa muy criminal, lo-

calizada en el centro del país.

La Unigold es prácticamente una subsidiaria de BG. El contrato con esa empresa es oneroso, una vergüenza, los legisladores lo aprobaron sin leerlo, por un acuerdo que hubo entre Fernández y el jefe político del PRD en ese momento.

El oro está siempre asociado a otros minerales de carácter estratégico. De manera que ellos están en eso. La Unigold, está establecida en la frontera con Haití, y ese yacimiento es dominicano y haitiano al mismo tiempo. Y ellos tienen un fuerte control fronterizo, con las tropas de ocupación en Haití.

Presencia de EEUU

Los EEUU recientemente hicieron la operación Más Allá del Horizonte. Metieron las tropas norteamericanas en Mao, en la provincia Valverde Mao, en el noroeste del país. Permanecieron durante casi 4 meses, haciendo labor de reconocimiento del terreno. Hablan de construir escuelas, algunos puentecitos, pero realmente eso también está vinculado al tema minero, a la exploración del terreno.

Lo van haciendo provincia por provincia, para tener un conocimiento del terreno en todo el país. Eso tiene que ver con los planes futuros de ocupación en toda la isla. Ya tienen ocupado a Haití, de manera que la amenaza contra nosotros es permanente. El país es una zona de retaguardia militar estratégica de los EEUU y la isla además tiene un potencial en materia de minerales, de oro.

Papel de los/as dominicanos/as en EEUU

Hay una parte muy activa de los/as dominicanos/as que están en EEUU que están dando un seguimiento a través de los diferentes medios de comunicación y por la comunicación permanente con la familia. Es un sector muy solidario con las luchas nacionales internas y expresó de múltiples maneras su simpatía con el paro.

Propuesta del Movimiento Caamañista

Estas condiciones son la respuesta de un capitalismo en crisis sistémica, estructural, de grandes dimensiones, quizás la más grande en toda su historia. Es una respuesta que empobrece mucho más a estas sociedades para salvar el capital. En ese contexto es que se dan las grandes tensiones sociales que están en marcha en la R.D. y en consecuencia, es un sistema que merece mucho más que una huelga de un día. Requiere un proceso de continua movilización.

Alrededor de un 70% de la sociedad dominicana está rechazando el gobierno (de Fernández) con mucha fuerza. Recientemente salió una encuesta centroamericana que coloca a Leonel entre el presidente más impopular ahora mismo de Centroamérica y el Caribe, superó a Lobo.

Naturalmente esto favorece al PRD en términos de la competencia electoral pero hay una parte grande de la sociedad que no quiere a ninguno de los 2, pero todavía no tiene un canal político que lo exprese de manera consistente y contundente. Ese es el gran desafío de todo este período, construir esa fuerza transformadora alternativa capaz de despertar la esperanza y ganar la confianza de una gran parte de

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